

## NOTICE.

"L'Umile Pianta" will appear next dated July 20th. All matter must reach the Editor by July 1st.

Again it must be noted that some sub-editors sent no communication whatever by the given date, May 12th. Mrs. Morton regrets that press of home occupations have made it necessary for her to resign the sub-editorship of the Psychology Notes. This has been undertaken by Miss Allen. The sub-editors are therefore as follows:—

*Psychology Notes*:—Miss E. C. Allen, 1, Cargate, Aldershot.

*Bran Tub*:—Miss E. Flower, at Lindum House, Lincoln.

*P.R.S. Notes*:—Miss H. Smeeton, Oakover, Ticehurst.

*Travel Notes*:—Mrs. Esselmont, 27, West Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

*Book Notes*:—Miss E. A. Smith, c/o Mrs. Bevan, 8, Laurences's Vicarage, Ramsgate.

Miss Wix has kindly consented to act as general sub-editor if the present editor should be at any time unable to get out the next issue.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

The London Committee Members have undertaken to correspond with the following 'years' of students to represent their views at committee meetings as far as possible.

Years:—1892; July, 1893; December, 1893—Miss W. Kitching, 18, Hastings Road, Ealing.

July, 1894; December, 1894—Miss E. A. Parish, P.N.E.U. Office, 26, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

1895—Miss L. Gray, 6, Milman Road, Reading (till Whitsuntide), or 5, Old Palace Lane, Richmond.

1896—Miss M. Conder, Maurice Hostel, Hoxton.

1897, 1898—Miss R. A. Pennethorne, Holmfield, Wadhurst.

## STUDENTS' MEETINGS

9

1899—Miss L. Faunce, 13, Chilworth Street, Bayswater.  
1900—Mrs. Ball, Colleendene, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon.

1901, 1902—Miss Parish.

1903, 1904—Miss H. Wix, c/o Lady Eady, 23, Hyde Park Gardens, London, W.

1905—Miss Parish.

1906, 1907, 1908—Miss M. Franklin, 50, Porchester Terrace, London, W.

## STUDENTS' MEETINGS.

A meeting of students was held in the York Rooms on April 11th. The following were present:—M. Conder, E. A. Parish, F. Judd, E. W. and G. Wilkinson, B. Dismorr, M. McShee, G. Flewker, R. A. Pennethorne, M. Franklin, E. Smith, L. Morris, and H. Smeeton.

The dates of publication for "L'Umile Pianta" were discussed, and the following decided upon:—February 1st and April 1st, Spring Term; June 1st and July 20th, Summer Term; October 1st and December 1st, Christmas Term.

The meeting expressed regret at the constant unpunctuality of the magazine's appearance. Questions having been asked by Branch Secretaries, the Central Meeting would advise all Branches to bear in mind two points:—

(1) Only members of the Association have any right, or should be invited to attend meetings. Students who are not members should be invited once, and asked to join as a matter of course. Should they refuse to do so, the case should be referred to the Central Committee for consideration. Strangers should never be invited, as many points could not be discussed in their presence without apparent disloyalty.

(2) It has always been found wisest to hold the meetings in public places, tea shops, etc., and *not* in private houses, as it is unadvisable to tax the hospitality of anyone, or to



give the due, which courtesy to a hostess involves to any one more than another in a general discussion.

#### BRANCH MEETINGS.

A pleasant and successful Branch Meeting has been held for the Redhill district. Four students were present. Secretary, Miss Judd.

A small meeting has been held in the Liverpool Branch, which hopes to meet once a term and discuss difficulties in the workings of R.P.S. subjects. Secretary, Miss D. Blease.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The Treasurer, Miss L. Gray, regrets that over fifty students have not yet paid their subscriptions for this year. As the issue of the magazine must be controlled by the income of the Association, this is a serious matter, and it is earnestly desired that the deferred payments may be made as promptly as possible.

#### P.R.S.

Especial attention is drawn to the notice appearing in the June *Parents' Review*, proposing a badge for P.R.S. children. Will all teaching students interest their children in the idea, please?

#### WANTED.

A Student going to the Bristol Conference who will undertake to report on the same for "L'Umile Pianta."

Articles or suggestions on how to take Scouting Expeditions with only two or three children.

#### BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

"The Man Eaters of Tsavo." By Colonel Patterson. (Most interesting and exciting account of the difficulties under which the Uganda Railway was built; would delight boys. I. E. F.).

"A Sea Dog of Devon." (Life of Sir John Hawkins.) Also delightful for boy's reading. I. E. F.).

"The Alhambra." By Washington Irving. (Gives Spanish legends and good illustrations. M. R.).

"Gleanings from Venetian History." By F. Marion Crawford. (Very interesting sidelights on Titian and his times. R. A. P.).

"The Romance of George Villiers Duke of Buckingham." (Just published. A real peep into the life of the times. The private letters between James I. and Stenie are most engaging. R. A. P.).

#### BOOK LIST.

"Bookbinding and the Care of Books." Douglas Cockerell. 5s. (A book to be thoroughly recommended to anyone attempting bookbinding; very practical and very useful.)

"Woman Suffrage." By Arnold Matthew. 1s. (A useful book on a subject which ought to interest all thinking women.)

"Moral Education." By E. H. Griggs. (A splendid book, which should be read by all students of education.)

"Education and the Higher Life." Henderson. (Interesting though slightly cranky.)

"The Knights of Art." By Amy Steadman. 6s. (A charming book for children, and helpful to all picture-talkers.)

#### QUOTATION.

"Education is the art of expression of the highest that is in us through all social developments. Its ends are to teach men the laws of the universe, both visible and invisible: to teach them how to meet the strenuous life, to make clear the supremacy of the soul over circumstance, to attain the highest ideals of art, poetry, music, and beauty; and highest of all to develop sympathy, to teach unselfish-



ness, the value and power of service. The educated man is he who is best fitted to serve his fellows, he who dedicated his life to the highest ideals of brotherhood."

## TRAVEL NOTES.

### TWO DAYS IN RAVENNA.

THE traveller journeying from Milan to Ravenna crosses the Plains of Lombardy. Here are level stretches of cultivated land, divided by perpendicular dykes. Towards the end of March the straight rows of poplar trees are covered with bright red catkins. Villages or clusters of farmsteads are scattered here and there, and many a fine Romanesque church, with its venerable tower, may be seen. Towards evening, the distant snow-covered Appenines, lit up by the setting sun, terminate and make beautiful what might have been a boundless, monotonous plain.

Ravenna has the fascination of a true Italian town, a charm of life and colour. There are narrow streets, old houses, and still more ancient churches; there are shops which, by displaying their wares in the street, add brightness to the scene; there are picturesque courtyards; there are flowers, green trees, and blue skies. As we took our first walk, in sunshine so brilliant that the shadows on the walls were sharply marked, and each leaf clearly defined, almost every object we passed claimed our notice—the carts drawn by oxen, the peasants in bright clothes and coloured handkerchiefs, the women breaking stones by the roadside, and singing at their work, the jolly barefoot boys, with white teeth, brown skins, and black hair. We were fortunate to see the town in holiday garb; but it may well be that it would appear sad and deserted were there less sunshine.

There are few "modern improvements" in Ravenna, and it is now small and of little importance, but it has a very long history. It was already an ancient town when

Augustus built the large port of Classis on a spot which, so greatly has the sea receded, is now five miles from the coast.

The days of Ravenna's greatest glory began in the fifth century, when the Emperor Honorius removed his capital from Rome to the well-walled city of Classis, the port of Ravenna. The Emperor's sister, Galla Placidia, widow of two kings, was regent during his absence, and was buried in the beautiful little mausoleum, the earliest church now remaining. In 493, Theodoric the Great, famous in legend and song as the hero "Dietrich of Bern," captured the city, and lived there in great splendour till he died. For a while Ravenna remained the capital of the Gothic kings, and enjoyed an almost Eastern splendour. Later it became the seat of the Governor, or exarch of the Greek Empire, and prospered under Justinian.

Honorius, Galla Placidia, above all Theodoric and Justinian were great builders, and many of the monuments they built remain, and can have changed little since they were erected, 1,500 years ago.

The history of Ravenna as an independent town does not end till 1441, when it was taken by the Venetians, but of its history subsequent to Justinian, few traces are to be found in the buildings. It is good, however, to remember that Dante, an exile from his native town, found a refuge here until his death. His friend Giotto, here on a visit to the great poet, painted the heads of the Fathers of the Church, now well nigh obliterated, on the ceiling of the Church of S. Giovanni Evangelist. More than 500 years later another great refugee, Garibaldi, found a haven here when fleeing from the Austrians with his brave wife, Anita. They had passed through many dangers and privations, and the fatigues she had undergone proved too much for Anita, who died after a few days. Finally, we must not forget Byron's love for Ravenna, where he lived for two years, and which he preferred to all other towns of Italy.



Probably there is no other town in Italy, with the exception of Rome, where we can receive so true an impression of early Byzantine architecture, as influenced by the heart of Rome—an architecture which, in its later development, was to produce the glory and splendour of St. Mark's, at Venice.

The churches of Ravenna have a venerable, dignified character which harmonises well with their quiet surroundings. The architecture is simple and severe. They are built of terra cotta bricks, narrow, like Roman tiles, and the exteriors have little ornamentation. But the interiors are glorified by delicately-carved capitals and jewel-like mosaics, which fill the churches with a suffusion of brilliant colours—blue, green, gold, white, red. Surely, nowhere in art, except, perhaps, in the cathedrals of France, can such colours be seen, and the designs are no less beautiful! The churches are not large. S. Vitale, the largest of the so-called circular churches, is 110 feet in diameter, while the little mausoleum of Galla Placidia is not more than 35 feet; but the dignity and beauty of proportions are most pleasing. "All is pure construction, for in no other system has the functional structure, the bones and muscle of a building, been more sufficient unto itself." Even in the interiors, "decoration was conceived of as the covering over, but not disguising, of this form, with a continuous and beautiful surface skin, obtained by the application of thin sheets of variously-coloured marbles and glittering mosaics." (The quotations are from "Mediaeval Art" by W. R. Lethaby.)

Ravenna is a town of churches, and I will not attempt what could only be a categorical account of the many we visited, but there are five of supreme importance:—The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, the Church of San Vitale, the basilica of S. Apollinare Nuovo, the baptistry of the Orthodox, the basilica of S. Apollinare in Classe.

Our first walk took us, through narrow and delightful

streets, to the spot where stand, side by side, the noble church of San Vitale and the mausoleum where the Empress Galla Placidia is buried. This church, built about 440, is the earliest in Ravenna, and its general appearance has remained unchanged.

The plan is that of a Latin cross (the four arms being of equal length) with a square central tower, domed in the interior. There are three ancient sarcophagi, an altar at the East end and the door at the West. A flood of blue light seems to fill the building from the mosaic which covers the walls and domed ceiling. The background is blue, a wonderfully intense lapis-lazuli, the figures are of white and the ornamentation of gold, with touches of red and green in the borders. Under the dome are gold stars on a blue ground, intended to represent Heaven, and round the centre the symbols of the Evangelists. At the angles are depicted eight of the Apostles; over the West door is a beautiful mosaic of Christ as a shepherd, and in the half-dome at the East is a naïve representation of St. Laurence burning a heretical book, while more orthodox writings are to be seen in a shelf hard by. On the North and South walls we see two golden stags drinking from a spring, among scroll work and foliage—an expanse of gold. Here are also to be found the remaining four Apostles. If these beautiful designs are examined closely it will be found that although they appear symmetrical and fill the required space, no smallest detail is ever repeated. This we found to be true not only of every border and pattern in this church, but of all the Byzantine work which we saw.

The church of S. Vitale was built by Justinian in 526-534 on the spot where the saint is supposed to have suffered martyrdom for encouraging a Christian martyr who was being led to his death. It is a splendid example of a fine Byzantine church, consisting, roughly, of two concentric octagons, the centre of which, roofed by a broad flat dome, is flanked by lower domes, and thus the weight is spread



over as large an area as possible. "This resulted in greater unity of construction than is found in any other highly developed buildings."

But one cannot stay long outside S. Vitale, even when the sun is shining and green lizards are disporting themselves in the crannies of the walls, and when one is entertained by children singing lustily in Italian!

The interior consists of three tiers of pillars and arches in the centre, of two tiers in the side chapels. The capitals of the pillars, in their wonderful carving, deeply undercut, are similar in character to those of Santa Sophia at Constantinople. There are many types of these 'impost' capitals, but the constructive principle is the same for all. A block of marble, slightly larger than the column which it is intended to surmount, is sloped at the base to the required size and ornamented with carving of foliage and animals, of lilies, of the "wind blown" acanthus leaf, or of intricate curves. Frequently the capital is surmounted by an 'impost' block similar in shape, but less elaborately ornamented. The broad top of this block bears the arch, and it is narrowed at the base so that the weight is gravitated to the centre of the capital which is supported by the column, and thus the strain on the delicately carved marble is lessened.

The mosaics in the choir are of dazzling beauty, but less simple in colouring, and therefore less easy to describe than those in the Mausoleum. The most prevalent shades are gold and green, but mother-o'-pearl and precious stones are used in profusion. The subjects are various: Stories from the Old Testament, the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Apostles, medallions of prophets and local saints. On the wall left of the window we see the Emperor Justinian and attendants with S. Maximian, who consecrated the church in 547. Above them is S. Ecclesius, who superintended the building of the Church. Opposite are the Empress Theodora and ladies of her court, above whom is S. Vitale, to whom the church is dedicated. The costumes in these mosaics give

opportunity for the display of much splendour. I would it were possible to convey an adequate impression of the effect of mosaic decoration; but remember that no corner of the surface to be covered is unornamented. Indeed, the designs of the borders, between the windows or under the arches, are by no means the least interesting portions.

Some time after leaving San Vitale, we betook ourselves to the picturesque market-place, on one side of which is an arcade formed of columns from the old palace of Theodoric. Here we purchased provisions for tea, consisting of 'pane' at "due soldi il pezzo," and a kind of long stick, "due per un soldo."

It is vain for the tourist to hope to be original in Italy! An enterprising 'cocchiere' was able to tell us exactly what we had seen, and what we intended still to see, and persuaded us to take a drive that afternoon. His enterprise was further evinced when we found that his son was to be our driver, while the father had secured the only other party of tourists in Ravenna! Our course lay along a straight, white road, with yellow coltsfoot and bright green, red-stalked spurge at the sides. A group of sheep near the river made an attractive subject for the camera, and their apparent eagerness to be photographed was amusing.

The Church of S. Apollinare in Classe is a large basilica of simple and severe proportions. Adjoining is one of the earliest known church towers. As bells were not used till 200 hundred years later, it is thought to have been erected either as a pillar of victory or to mark some sacred spot. The basilica was being "restored," but the beautiful mosaics in the choir had not been spoilt, and it was interesting to try to interpret the symbols on the early Christian sarcophagi.

We continued our drive to "La Pineta," the pine forest well loved by Dante and Boccaccio. Here we enjoyed a sumptuous tea off the cakes and "pane" bought in the



morning, and rambled in the wood picking flowers, and making buttonholes of violets.

Before returning home we visited the mausoleum of Theodoric on the further side of the town. This, the most curious building we saw, is round, with a flat roof made of a single stone, and has peculiar projecting buttresses. It is appropriate that the tomb of the great Dietrich should be in this peaceful garden, on the outskirts of the town where he gained so great a victory.

We had finished our sight-seeing for the day, but much remained to be seen. There was the beautiful basilica of S. Apollinare Nuovo, built by Theodoric in the year 500, which contains mosaics second to none in Ravenna! These cover the whole of the upper part of the walls of the nave and clearstory, between the windows and under the arches. At the East end of the North wall is an "Adoration of the Magi"; at the West an interesting representation of the ancient town of Classis. Between is a graceful row of virgins bearing martyr's crowns in their hands, and clad in rich garments of white and gold, gorgeously ornamented, with sandals on their feet, and their hair bound by gold and jewelled fillets. Between them are green date palms, and at their feet, flowers. They resemble one another in general appearance, but in no detail of attitude or ornament are two figures identical. On the South wall, opposite Classis, we see the city of Ravenna in its ancient glory, with the palace of Theodoric as it looked in its own day. Then follow a long procession of white-robed saints, bearing their crowns of martyrdom, leading to the East, where is represented Christ enthroned. Between the windows on either side are depicted the Apostles and the teachers of the Church, under elaborate canopies surmounted by doves. Above each window is a scene from the Bible. Many of the simpler designs under the window-arches might be sketched for future use in embroidery.

Not less beautiful is the "Battistero degli Ortodossi,"

which was built in the middle of the fifth century. Outside, a simple octagonal, brick building; inside, it is a jewelled shrine! In the centre is a large font, formerly a Roman bath. There is a double row of arcades, with elaborate capitals, and some marble sculpture near the windows, the rest of the building being entirely covered with mosaic. In the dome is represented the "Baptism of Christ," with a quaint figure of the river god of the Jordan. This is executed chiefly in white and green on a gold ground. Lower down are the Apostles—white on a blue ground, and among festoons; between the arches of the lower tier are the prophets, gold on blue. Above the windows are alternately thrones and altars, and it is these and the beautiful and elaborate designs on the lower portions of the wall which give the freest opportunities for the display of fancy and brilliant colour—red, blue, green, gold. Here, too, one could spend much time examining the great variety of designs, and making notes of the simpler patterns.

Before leaving Ravenna I must not forget to mention the "Accademia di Bell Arti," which contains the masterpiece of Tullio Lombardi, a recumbent statue of a dead warrior of Ravenna, full of pathetic beauty and nobility. We know nothing of this "Guerrier Ravennate," except that he died in 1501.

Nor must I forget the exquisite ivory throne in the Archi Episcopale Palace, carved in Alexandria in the sixth century, and said to be the finest ivory in existence.

This was our last day in Ravenna, for we were to leave for Venice next morning.

Long as this account has grown, much remains unsaid, and I fear it is not possible to convey the impression made upon the traveller by this quiet, deserted town, which contains so many records of the glory and power of a mighty empire, which passed away more than a thousand years ago.



## HOLIDAY IN BELGIUM.

DEAR EDITOR,

It might interest you to hear of a perfectly delightful holiday my brother and I had this Easter in Belgium. We spent eleven days, and visited four towns, and the first, and certainly most charming, was Bruges. The very name makes me feel at once as if modern rush and bustle were impossibilities, and as if we lived in the Middle Ages: a more absolutely quaint and mediæval town, I think, would be hard to find. It is riddled by canals, which reflect all the lovely old houses which go down to the water's edge, and they are crossed by the prettiest bridges. The colouring of the brick roofs is beautiful. Old golds, pale yellows, and brick-reds, all mellowed with time, harmonise and glow with wonderful richness. The churches are very fine, the buildings most beautiful, and every house nearly has its history and its associations. In the large open market-place stands the glorious belfry, lofty and perfect in design, a witness of the many struggles, defeats, and victories of these sturdy Flemish folk, and a sharer in all their interests and joys. The pictures, too, in this town are most beautiful. Here we find the works of Hans Memling at their very best, and what a treat they are! The colouring is as fresh as if it had been put on yesterday instead of about 1450. The detail is marvellous—every hair, every jewel, every blade of grass may be appreciated through a magnifying glass. Here we see in the Hospital of St. John that gem in art, St. Ursula's Shrine, and many other gems of which I have no space to write.

We could have spent weeks in Bruges, so fascinating is it. In sunlight, and in the pale moonlight, be the hour what it may, the place is full of subtle charm. Here the priests go on their various missions, the Carmelite Brothers, with their bare sandalled feet and tonsured heads, brown cloaks and knotted ropes; also the Sisters with those large white linen caps, with the turned back flaps that look exactly

like big white birds, and ever up and down the cobbled streets and 'quais' the children 'clacket' along in clogs. We really could hardly tear ourselves away. Our Pension, too, was a charming old sixteenth century house that had belonged to a Flemish count, with enormous rooms and beautiful old furniture. But Ghent, with its great treasure, Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb," was not to be rushed over, and so our next abode was there. This picture is too beautiful to describe in a short letter; it is so noble in conception, so marvellous in detail, that even to attempt a description would take too much space. We spent two whole mornings over it, and could spend many more. It is in the Cathedral of St. Bavon, and is certainly, as the little sacristan said in his very broken English, "Ze trezore of ze vawrld" (Phonetic spelling).

From Ghent we went to Brussels, a beautiful but quiet modern town, with some interesting pictures of the old Flemish school and some fine Rubens, and from thence to Antwerp, an interesting town with a glorious picture gallery and three magnificent Rubens in the Cathedral. From Antwerp we went straight back to Ostend and Dover, and felt we had never had such an absolutely perfect and inspiring holiday. The whole trip could easily be done on £6 each including ticket—the pensions are most comfortable at five francs a day each. I shall be only too delighted to give any details and addresses to anyone caring to go. I would advise anyone who does go to read 'Bruges,' in the Mediæval Towns series beforehand, and above all to take Grant Allen's "Cities of Belgium" to read there, and either before or after to read Martin Conway's intensely interesting "Flemish Artists."

With apologies for taking up so much room, I am, yours sincerely,

ELIZABETH A. MELLIS SMITH.

May 7th, 1908.